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San Diego Named Among Best Places for Service Members and Military Families

**ASSOCIATION OF DEFENSE COMMUNITIES DESIGNATED
 SAN DIEGO A 2018 ‘GREAT AMERICAN DEFENSE COMMUNITY’**

SAN DIEGO – As a national leader in providing resources and support for service members, the City of San Diego is being recognized as one of the best places for improving the quality of life for members of the military and their families. Today, the Association of Defense Communities named the San Diego region to the 2018 class of Great American Defense Communities.

“San Diego’s history is intertwined with the military and we have a long tradition of supporting our active duty and veteran military members, their families and the civilians who also serve on our bases,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “This national recognition is a credit to the citizens of San Diego, businesses, nonprofit organizations and universities who all do their part to work with, care for, and support our military community.”

Home to the world’s largest concentration of military, the San Diego region has been shaped by strong relationships with active duty service personnel, veterans and their families. More than 106,500 active duty Navy and Marines are stationed in San Diego. Additionally, more than 233,800 military veterans reside in the San Diego region.

In 2016, Mayor Faulconer and the San Diego Housing Commission launched “Housing Our Heroes” to help 1,000 homeless veterans successfully find long-term housing. San Diego was also the first city to join the national Hidden Heroes initiative supporting the long-term needs of military caregivers.

San Diego was selected as a Great American Defense Community for regional support of three major programs operated by local non-profits.

- **Support the Enlisted Projects** (STEP) offers financial counseling and education as a safety net for the most financially vulnerable service members and families.
- **Stand Down San Diego** provides access to services for homeless veterans, including food, shelter and clothing.

- **Veteran Ventures** at University of California San Diego is a business accelerator program that supports veteran entrepreneurs.

The Great American Defense Communities program recognizes overall support that communities and regions provide to service members and military families, including community building and integration, educational and employment opportunities, and family support. USAA is the initiative's official sponsor.

This year's selected communities will be honored at the Defense Communities National Summit in Washington, D.C. in June 2018. For more information about the Great American Defense Communities program, visit <https://goo.gl/tkt2us>.

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